



Auditor
Charles E. Walder
Chief Fiscal Officer

February 25, 2022

Judge Timothy J. Grendell
Gauga County Probate Juvenile Court
231 Main Street, Suite 200
Chardon, OH 44024

Judge Grendell,

My Office is in receipt of your letters dated February 23, 2022 (Exhibit A) and February 24, 2022 (Exhibit B), whereby you (1) demand that records of my Office be “removed from the internet immediately” and then (2) respectfully request that my Office “redact the vendor’s home address from the publication.” It is curious that your letter arrived along with a similar letter from the Gauga County Park District—which your letter references—making malicious false statements to try to limit public transparency.

Here you have taken two (2) distinctly different positions in the course of 24 hours, giving my Office little time to respond. First, regarding your February 23rd demand; as you are no doubt aware, you have no jurisdiction over my Office’s records. Materials submitted to my Office for processing payments of public funds become records of my Office upon receipt and are also public records, subject to proper legal redaction. Which then brings us to your February 24th request; to redact the address of a specific County vendor. Redacting records of payments of public funds is not in the public’s interest; it opens the door to fraud and theft of public funds.

Additionally, a simple GoogleTM internet search produces not only the subject vendor’s address, but birthdate, photo, political affiliation, previous and current employers, education, and licensures (I have copies of said GoogleTM search results if you are unable to do one for yourself). Therefore, making this public record available on our website has no net effect on this vendor’s exposure to risk, contrary to your assertion. Any alleged risk was manufactured by the court.

Furthermore, as you are very intimate with the changes to the statute, ORC 319.16 requires that I keep a record of all warrants paid under protest. My Office is keeping the public record of all payments of public funds made under protest on our website in order for it to be readily accessible to the good people of Gauga County—whose money funds those payments to vendors—as well as the state auditors. Improving access to public records is part of my continued efforts to increase transparency in Gauga County government in order to combat public corruption and abuse of public funds.

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That said, I also firmly believe in civil discourse and cooperation between government officials. Therefore, as a courtesy, I have asked my staff to electronically remove the address from the published version of this record (both from your Administrative Order and the vendor's invoice) on the online publication. Please note however that by simply providing reasonable accounting documentation, evidentiary matter, and following standard accounting practices used by the rest of the County this could have all been completely avoided.

As public servants, we all have a duty to inform the public on matters relating to public money – including, of course, payments to vendors directed by court order and paid under protest. We are both accountable to the public, and transparency is vital to ensuring that accountability. People who have an issue with transparency are people with something to hide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Walder', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Charles E. Walder
Geauga County Auditor

FROM THE CHAMBERS OF JUDGE TIMOTHY GRENDALL

Geauga County Probate/Juvenile Court • 231 Main Street, Suite 200 • Chardon, OH 44024

February 23, 2022

Charles Walder, Auditor
Geauga County Auditor's Office
231 Main Street, Suite 1-A
Chardon, OH 44024

Auditor Walder,

Your decision to publicly publish the home address of one of the Court's visitation supervisors has placed that individual and her family in potential jeopardy. Sometimes, the Court employs visitation supervisors in situations where a parent has anger management issues or a history of violent behavior. For that reason, the supervisor's home address is kept confidential.

Unfortunately, since you insist on mailing payment checks directly to the Court's vendors, instead of sending them up one flight of steps to the Court or allowing Court staff to pick them up from your fiscal office as past Auditor's did, the Court has no choice but to provide you with the vendors' addresses.

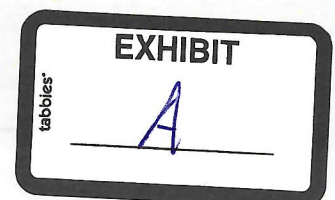
Since neither Ohio Law nor the Supreme Court's Rules of Superintendence require or even authorize you to post Court records publicly, the Court could not have predicted that you or your office would recklessly put any of the Court's valuable vendors, such as its visitation supervisors, at risk. Therefore, the Court records that you published without the Court's authorization must be removed from the internet immediately.

Going forward, the Court will replace the address for vendors in need of confidentiality (such as visitation supervisors) with the Court's address on copies of financial documents submitted to your office for payment, and the Court will retain the originals for State Audit purposes. Upon receipt of the vendor's payment check, the Court will forward the check to the vendor. This will protect the Court's vendors, such as visitation supervisors, where confidentiality is needed.

Thank you for your cooperation,



Timothy J. Grendell
Judge



FROM THE CHAMBERS OF JUDGE TIMOTHY GRENDALL

Geauga County Probate/Juvenile Court • 231 Main Street, Suite 200 • Chardon, OH 44024

February 24, 2022

Charles Walder, Auditor
Geauga County Auditor's Office
231 Main Street, Suite 1-A
Chardon, OH 44024

Auditor Walder,

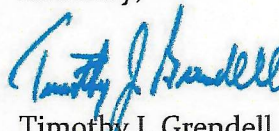
My February 23, 2022 letter to you was intended to bring to your attention the fact that your decision to publish the home address of one of the Court's vendors on the official County Auditor government website recklessly puts the vendor and the vendor's family at unnecessary risk, in the hope of protecting the vendor by your removal of the vendor's address from the publication.

Unfortunately, not only have you not redacted the vendor's home address, but you have now published my February 23, 2022 letter. Though it is a public record and available to individual members of the public upon request, publication of the letter draws attention to the existence of the vendor's home address on the official County Auditor government website, and thereby increases the risk to the vendor and the vendor's family. The purpose of the letter was to protect the safety of the Court's vendor and the vendor's family, and one would hope that you could put political and personal animus aside for the protection of an innocent third party.

Once again, I respectfully request that you redact the vendor's home address from the publication.

Furthermore, since you are now in the business of publishing correspondence on the official County Auditor government website, enclosed with this letter is a copy of the letter recently submitted to you by the Geauga Park District's legal counsel, as well as the Ohio Supreme Court's recent unanimous 7-0 decision against you (*State ex rel. Grendell v. Walder*, Slip Opinion No. 2022-Ohio-204), which, for consistency, should also be published for the sake of "Public Transparency".

Sincerely,


Timothy J. Grendell
Judge

EXHIBIT

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